IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 19 without prejudice.

Please amend/replace claim 17 as follows:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented) A fuel filter assembly, comprising:

a housing comprising a base and a housing cover, said housing having an inlet and an outlet;

a filter element disposed within said housing, said filter element having a raised collar with an opening formed therethrough; and

a restriction sensor, comprising: a probe for insertion into the raised collar.

Claim 2 (Original) The filter assembly of claim 1, wherein said restriction sensor comprises a display face and a moveable needle operatively attached to said display face for displaying output from said sensor.

Claim 3 (Original) The filter assembly of claim 1, wherein said housing cover has a threaded opening formed therein, and said restriction sensor comprises a threaded base portion which fits inside of said threaded opening in said housing.

Claim 4 (Original) The filter assembly of claim 3, wherein said restriction sensor comprises an electronic pressure sensor.

Claim 5 (Original) The filter assembly of claim 4, wherein said restriction sensor comprises a first pressure sensor for sensing fluid pressure outside the filter element, and a second pressure sensor for sensing pressure inside the filter element.

Claim 6 (Original) A fuel filter assembly comprising:

a) a housing comprising

a base having an inlet and an outlet, and

a housing cover which is removable attachable to said base, said housing cover having a threaded opening formed therein;

b) a filter element disposed within said housing, said filter element comprising filter media and first and second end caps attached to opposite ends of said filter media, said end caps being formed from a flexible elastomeric material each of said end caps having a respective opening formed centrally therethrough, one of said end caps having a raised collar surrounding said opening; and

c) a restriction sensor, comprising

a probe for insertion into the filter element through said collar; and

a threaded base portion which fits inside of said threaded opening of said housing cover.

Claim 7 (Original) The filter assembly of claim 6, wherein said restriction sensor comprises a display face and a movable needle operatively attached to said display face for displaying output from said sensor.

Claim 8 (Original) The filter assembly of claim 7, wherein said housing cover has a threaded opening formed therein, and said restriction sensor comprises a threaded base portion which fits inside of said threaded opening.

Claim 9 (Original) The filter assembly of claim 8, wherein said restriction sensor comprises an electronic pressure sensor.

Claim 10 (Original) The filter assembly of claim 9, wherein said restriction sensor comprises a first sensor for sensing fluid pressure outside the filter element, and a second sensor for sensing pressure inside the filter element.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented) A method of monitoring restriction in a fuel filter, comprising:

sensing fluid pressure inside of a fuel filter element;

sensing fluid pressure outside of the fuel filter element and comparing it to the fluid pressure inside the fuel filter element to determine a pressure differential; and

displaying a visual warning when the pressure differential exceeds a predetermined limit;

wherein the filter element has an end cap with a raised collar having an opening formed therethrough, and wherein the fluid pressure inside the filter element is sensed by a probe which has been inserted through the opening of the raised collar.

Claim 12 (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein said visual warning is displayed on the face of a gauge.

Claim 13 (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein said visual warning is displayed by activating a warning signal within a vehicle.

Claim 14-16 (canceled)

Claim 17 (Currently Amended) A fuel filter assembly, comprising:

a base portion having an inlet and an outlet;

a filter element comprising: filter media having an exterior surface and an interior surface, the interior surface defining a central cavity; a first end cap disposed on one end of the filter media; and a second end cap disposed on another end of the filter media, the first end cap having an opening providing access to the central cavity and the second end cap having an opening providing access to the central cavity, the opening of the second end cap being fluidly sealed about the outlet and the inlet being in fluid communication with the exterior surface;

a housing being removably secured to the base portion; and

a restriction sensor, comprising: a probe for insertion into the filter element through the first end cap, the probe providing an output indicative of a restriction of the fuel filter assembly, and a gauge operatively connected to the probe and disposed outside of the housing, the gauge being configured to provide a visual indication of the output of the probe, wherein the first end cap further comprises a raised collar disposed about the opening of the first end cap and the probe passes through an opening in the raised collar.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented) The fuel filter assembly as in claim 17, wherein the base portion further comprises a threaded portion configured to engage a threaded opening of the housing.

Claim 19 (canceled)

Claim 20 (Previously Presented) The fuel filter assembly as in claim 17, wherein the first end cap and the second end cap are each formed from a flexible elastomeric material.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented) The fuel filter assembly as in claim 17, wherein the restriction sensor further comprises a threaded portion for threadingly engaging an opening in the housing.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented) The filter assembly of claim 17, wherein the restriction sensor comprises an electronic pressure sensor.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented) The filter assembly of claim 17, wherein the restriction sensor comprises a first pressure sensor for sensing fluid pressure outside the filter element, and a second pressure sensor for sensing fluid pressure inside the filter element.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented) The filter assembly of claim 23, wherein the restriction sensor is configured to continually display the pressure differential and the first pressure sensor and the second pressure sensor are electronic pressure sensors that provide an output indicative of a restriction level of the filter assembly, wherein the output varies as the restriction level varies.